

AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mrs. MCCARTHY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, as you have heard our colleagues coming down to the well and talking passionately on the anniversary of the Iraq war and the debate that will go later on in this week and a vote that will come on to the floor of the House, I think that this is what certainly the American people want to see; but tonight, Mr. Speaker, I also want to talk about something else.

We in Congress must keep our eyes and ears open on all things that are happening around us; and today I want to talk about the tens of thousands of Federal Aviation Administration employees that are working without a contract.

Most of these workers are represented by the National Air Traffic Controllers Association, Professional Airways System Specialist, and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees.

The FAA under the Bush administration has attacked the collective bargaining process. The FAA has not implemented a single negotiated and ratified contract with any of its contract unions. FAA employees need a fair collective bargaining process restored.

Just as this House gave collective bargaining rights to TSA employees in the 9/11 bill, which was the right thing to do, we must do no less for the employees of the FAA. Let me be very clear on this point. Our air traffic controllers do not have a contract with the FAA.

The FAA imposed work and pay rules on these individuals last September. There is no Federal law that recognizes imposed work and pay rules as a contract. Morale among FAA employees is extremely low. Retirements are far exceeding FAA's planning. Fatigue among those employees who remain is a major concern, and these are all direct effects of the unilaterally imposed work rules.

In 2003, there were over 15,000 air traffic controllers. At the end of 2006, there were barely 14,000. Of the 14,000 working today, almost 2,000 of them are trainees and not fully certified. At the same time, and by no means by coincidence, operational errors are on the rise at the FAA's busiest facilities, including Atlanta-Hartsfield and the Southern California TRAY-CON.

Current FAA projections are that by the year 2010, which is only a few years away, 40 percent of the air traffic control workforce will have 4 years or less on the job.

This House has a duty to these individuals to a fair process. That is all they are asking for, nothing more, nothing less.

Mr. Speaker, a lot of people do not understand the job that air traffic controllers have, yet they have the control of the thousands and thousand of lives

on a daily basis. Every single day that people fly, it is the air traffic controllers that are basically controlling the skies to make us safe.

And being that we are talking about 9/11, think about what our air traffic controllers did on that day. They brought down thousands and thousands of planes without one incident. They saved so many lives, and yet here the administration is taking away the right for them to earn a decent pay.

The pressure that is up in those towers is unbelievable. I have spent time there just to see what that job was like. They are not asking for more or less. All they are asking for is a contract.

This House has a duty to make sure that those workers have what is due them.

REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1227, GULF COAST HURRICANE HOUSING RECOVERY ACT OF 2007

Mr. MCGOVERN, from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 110-53) on the resolution (H. Res. 254) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1227) to assist in the provision of affordable housing to low-income families affected by Hurricane Katrina, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Curtis, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed without amendment a concurrent resolution of the House of the following title:

H. Con. Res. 20. Concurrent resolution calling on the Government of the United Kingdom to immediately establish a full, independent, and public judicial inquiry into the murder of Northern Ireland defense attorney Patrick Finucane, as recommended by Judge Peter Cory as part of the Weston Park Agreement, in order to move forward on the Northern Ireland peace process.

The message also announced that the Senate has passed a joint resolution and a concurrent resolution of the following titles in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S.J. Res. 5. Joint resolution proclaiming Casimir Pulaski to be an honorary citizen of the United States posthumously.

S. Con. Res. 14. Concurrent resolution commemorating the 85th anniversary of the founding of the American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association, a leading association for the 1,300,000 United States citizens of Greek ancestry and Philhellenes in the United States.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. DOGGETT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DOGGETT addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

LACK OF POLITICAL PROGRESS IN IRAQ

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, last week the New York Times reported that Iraq is falling well short of the political progress they were supposed to have made by now. Still no constitutional reform. Still no local elections. Still no final action on a law governing distribution of oil revenues. Still no reversal of the de-Baathification laws.

The Bush administration is now saying that their military escalation needs time to work and that these political goals will not be met until the end of the year.

I think it is clear what is going on here. What we have is another tactic by the White House in an attempt to run out the clock until January of 2009 when they can hand over the reins and make Iraq look like someone else's problem.

The President has said that the military commitment to Iraq is not open-ended; yet all evidence is to the contrary.

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The supporters of this war, a group whose numbers are dwindling by the day, tell us the next 6 months are critical. This really is the last chance for success. Time and time again, deadlines are established and not met, but there are no consequences, nor is there accountability. I am of the belief that the Iraqi Government won't get its act together until it is forced to govern on its own, until it is no longer propped up by the presence of more than 150,000 American soldiers.

As it is now, as long as we continue with this military occupation, Iraqis have absolutely no incentive to push for democratic reform. As the Times article indicated, the President has waved off these concerns, accusing those of us who want to apply deadlines, pressure of being part of a culture of instant results.

Instant results? I am sorry, the President has had 4 years and more than \$400 billion to make this work. Besides, it is this administration that assured us we would be greeted as liberators, that democratizing Iraq would be a cinch, that there would be hardly any sacrifice at all. Now that they have turned out to be monumentally wrong, they are wanting to know why we are demanding answers 4 years later.

I, for one, am tired of being told to be patient, especially when this body is asked to write another enormous check for this war, especially when my country is becoming a global pariah, especially when we learn that our Iraq policy has increased the threat of terrorism, especially when Americans are dying by the thousands, and those lucky enough to make it home alive